

**POLICY (XI-A): DCFS EDUCATIONAL LEAVE AND EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

**DCFS Policy No. XI-A establishes guidelines for administering the DCFS Educational Leave and Educational Assistance Programs. This policy addresses the types of leave and assistance available, the application and selection processes and criteria, related personnel and contract processes, and participant benefits and responsibilities under the program. Also included is information on the role of the employee performance evaluation and procedures associated with completion of the program.**

**In administering the DCFS Educational Leave and Educational Assistance Program, DCFS will adhere to all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The program will comply with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and will be administered without regard to age, religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, sex, race, color, or national origin.**

**PROCEDURE (XI-A1): EDUCATIONAL LEAVE**

1. Full-Time Educational Leave - Full-time educational leave may be granted to an employee to attend an accredited educational institution to pursue a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. When on approved full-time educational leave, the employee is granted time off on a full-time basis (40 hours per week). Upon completion of the educational leave program, the employee agrees to work for DCFS in a direct service position. The work commitment will be calculated at the rate of two (2) months for each month of educational leave. Attendance in any part of a month will be considered as a full month.
2. Part-Time Educational Leave - Part-time educational leave is granted to an employee to attend an accredited educational institution to pursue a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. The employee is granted twenty (20) hours or less time off from work. Upon completion of the educational leave program, the employee agrees to work for DCFS in a direct service position.. The work commitment will be calculated at the rate of one month for each month of educational leave. Attendance in any part of a month will be considered as a full month.

**PROCEDURE (XI-A2): EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

The Child Welfare Student Stipend Program is available to eligible students entering their senior year of study. Students selected to receive a stipend must enter into a contract and commit to employment with DCFS and remain employed with the division for a minimum of one (1) year following graduation.

**POLICY (XI-B): DCFS MSW EDUCATIONAL LEAVE PROGRAM**

The purpose of the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program is to enable the Division to employ an increased number of persons who possess the MSW degree to work in programs throughout the state that serve Title IV-E children. Full-time or part-time educational leave may be approved for an employee pursuing an MSW to attend the University of Arkansas at Little Rock MSW Program, located in Little Rock (UALR), or the UALR off-campus program, located at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville (UAF) School of Social Work. The DCFS Director can grant an employee special approval to attend accredited Schools of Social Work in bordering states if the school is in close proximity to Arkansas and is readily accessible by the employee.

The participants in the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program are responsible for satisfying identified academic requirements and fulfilling specific obligations to DCFS while on educational leave. Failure to meet these responsibilities constitutes a violation of the Educational Leave Contract (DCFS-4331) and will result in contract termination.

**PROCEDURE (XI-B1): ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES**

The DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program is limited to current DCFS employees with a minimum of two (2) consecutive years of full-time regular status DCFS employment working in child welfare prior to January 1 of the year of application. Preference will be given to employees who are in Family Service Worker, Family Service Worker Specialist, and Family Service Worker Supervisor positions. To be eligible to apply for the DCFS Educational Leave Program, the employee must currently occupy a position designated as a grade 22 or lower.

**PROCEDURE (XI-B2): FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME MSW  
EDUCATIONAL LEAVE**

- A. Under the full-time DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program, the selected employee is relieved of all duties for the duration of the program and allowed to attend the UALR MSW Program, at either the Little Rock or Fayetteville campus, on a full-time basis to pursue an MSW degree. While in the program, the participant will occupy a position at a salary determined by the DCFS Director and retain all benefits normally afforded a regular status employee, unless specifically stated in policy. (See Procedure XI-B13 Rights and Benefits Retained.)

- B. The part-time MSW Educational Leave Program affords the selected employee the opportunity to attend the UALR MSW Program, at either the Little Rock or Fayetteville campus, on a part-time basis and relieves the employee of partial responsibility for job duties, in proportion to the number of semester hours attempted. The part-time educational leave program must be completed within three calendar years. The part-time participant receives a salary and retains all rights and benefits while in the program, except where stated otherwise in policy. (See Procedure XI-B13 Rights and Benefits Retained.)
- C. Employees who already are enrolled in the UALR MSW Program may apply for acceptance in the MSW Educational Leave Program if they meet all other eligibility requirements for the program.
- D. Tuition, fees, and books will be provided by DCFS through a contract with UALR. The Division will not pay for parking or non-required student activity fees.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B3): APPLICATION PROCESS**

Participation in the MSW Educational Leave Program requires successful completion of a two-fold application and approval process, as follows:

- 1.) Application and acceptance into the UALR MSW Program; and
- 2.) Application and acceptance into the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program.

The employee must follow both the UALR and Divisional procedures described in Procedure XI-B4 and Procedure XI-B5 below.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B4): UALR/UAF MSW PROCEDURES**

- A. Obtaining Application Forms - The employee must obtain the necessary admissions packet from UALR. Application forms for the UALR MSW Program are needed for the full-time and part-time programs at the Little Rock and Fayetteville campus. Application forms requesting entrance into the UALR off-campus program in Fayetteville must be obtained from the Graduate Coordinator at the UALR MSW Program.
- B. Admission Criteria - The employee must be accepted into the UALR MSW Program prior to acceptance into the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program on either a full-time or part-time basis. Information on admissions criteria can be obtained directly from UALR.

- C. Completion/Submission of Application Forms - The required application forms must be completed and submitted as indicated by UALR. Pre-application assistance is available through the UALR MSW Program. Upon submission of the required application forms, the employee must forward a Letter of Interest to the DCFS Professional Development Unit.
- D. Deadline for Submission of Forms - Application forms must be submitted within the time frames established by UALR. Typically, forms must be submitted by March 1 to be considered for the MSW program beginning in August of the same year.
- E. Testing Requirements - The employee is required to take and pass either the Miller Analogy Test (MAT) or the Graduate Record Exam (GRE). The employee must pay all costs associated with the testing and is responsible for submitting the entrance examination score to the UALR MSW Program.
- F. Acceptance/Non-Acceptance - UALR will notify the employee regarding the status of his/her application. Upon acceptance, the employee must forward a copy of the notification letter from UALR to the DCFS Professional Development Unit.

**PROCEDURE (XI-B5): DIVISIONAL PROCEDURES –MSW EDUCATIONAL  
LEAVE PROGRAM**

- A. Recruitment -On an annual basis, DCFS will publicize the availability of educational leave positions and accept applications for full-time and part-time MSW educational leave from qualified DCFS employees. The DCFS Professional Development Unit will distribute the information that generally describes the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program and the process necessary for acceptance. The process includes successful completion of: 1.) An initial screening, 2.) Application submission, 3.) Selection and recommendation by the DCFS Educational Leave Committee, and 4.) Final approval by the Division Director.
- B. Initial Screening Process - The DCFS employee must submit a Letter of Interest to the Program Coordinator/Manager of the DCFS Professional Development Unit. The Letter of Interest may be submitted at any time after the statewide announcement, but no later than April 1 of the year in which the employee plans to matriculate. The Letter of Interest should contain the following, at a minimum:

- A statement expressing the employee's desire to be considered for participation in the DCFS MSW full-time or part-time program, and a request for an application for admission.
- An affirmation that to the best of the employee's knowledge, the employee meets the following minimum eligibility requirements:
  - Is a current DCFS permanent employee with at least two (2) consecutive years of full-time regular status employment with DCFS working in child welfare prior to January 1 of the year of application.
  - Occupies a grade 22 position or less.
  - Has accrued no more than three (3) disciplinary points for infraction of departmental conduct standards during the past two years.
- A statement explaining why the employee is interested in obtaining a MSW degree and how obtaining such a degree would benefit the Division.
- A statement asserting an understanding of and a willingness to fulfill the required work commitment to DCFS if educational leave is granted.
- A statement relating the status of employee's application for admission to the UALR MSW Program.

Within ten (10) working days from receipt of the Letter of Interest, the DCFS Professional Development Unit will determine if the employee meets the minimum eligibility requirements.

If the employee meets the minimum eligibility requirements, the Program Coordinator/Manager of the DCFS Professional Development Unit will:

- Send the employee a letter acknowledging receipt of the Letter of Interest and confirming that the employee meets the minimum eligibility requirements;
- Include a copy of the DHS-1188 "Application for Part-Time or Full-Time Educational Leave,";
- Include a blank copy of "Arkansas Department of Human Services Educational Leave Contract (Full-time/Part-time MSW Student)"(CFS-4331) for review.
- Forward a copy of the letter confirming the employee's eligibility for consideration of acceptance to the UALR MSW Program.

If the employee does not meet the minimum eligibility requirements for consideration of acceptance, the Program Coordinator/Manager of the DCFS Professional Development Unit will notify the employee by letter.

C. Completion/Submission of Application Forms - Upon notification of acceptance to the UALR MSW Program, the employee will forward the following documentation to the DCFS Professional Development Unit:

- A completed DHS-1188 "Application for Part-Time or Full-Time Educational Leave," signed by the immediate supervisor(s) and the Area Manager, if applicable;
- A written recommendation from the supervisor attesting to the employee's attitude, work ethic, and future potential, as required on the DHS- 1188; or
- A written narrative from the supervisor stating reasons for disapproval, as required on the DHS- 1188, if applicable;
- A copy of the application and other information submitted to the UALR MSW Program; and,
- A copy of the Letter of Acceptance from the UALR MSW Program.

In the event the employee does not receive supervisory approval on the DHS-1188, the employee's denied application and other documentation should be routed to the DCFS Professional Development Unit. Upon receipt, the Program Coordinator or Manager of the DCFS Professional Development Unit will forward the denied application to the Division's Assistant Director for Community Services and/or Director for review and disposition.

- D. Deadline for Submission of Forms – Completed application forms must be submitted to the DCFS Professional Development Unit within ten (10) days of receipt of the Letter of Acceptance from the UALR MSW Program. Applications must be received by **June 1** to be considered for the MSW program beginning in August of the same year.
- E. Routing Forms - The routing of the applications will follow prescribed departmental routing procedures, as detailed in the instructions in the DHS-1188.
- F. Notification to Applicants – The DCFS Professional Development Unit will notify each applicant regarding the status of his/her application (DHS-1188) within ten (10) working days of receipt. Upon acceptance, the applicant will be advised that the application will be submitted to the DCFS Educational Leave Committee for further consideration. When an applicant is rejected, the reason for non-acceptance will be provided.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B6): THE SELECTION PROCESS:**

The following describes the selection process by which a participant is chosen for the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program. This section includes the composition and responsibilities of the DCFS Educational Leave Committee and the in-person interview.

- A. Committee Responsibilities – The DCFS Educational Leave Committee will review all applicants who have been accepted by UALR and have met the established criteria for the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program. The review will include conducting in-person interviews to prioritize applicants.
- B. Committee Composition – Committee members will be appointed on a yearly basis by the Division Director. The committee will consist of seven (7) individuals, as follows:
- One Assistant Director
  - One representative from the Community Services Section
  - One graduate from the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program
  - Two Area Managers
  - One Family Service Worker or Family Service Worker Specialist
  - One representative from the University Partnership
- C. Criteria for Selection – The committee will assess each application using the following criteria:
- Type of position occupied, with preference given to individuals in Family Service Worker, Family Service Worker Specialist, and Family Service Worker Supervisor positions.
  - Length of service with DCFS, with an emphasis on years/months spent in direct service positions.
  - Performance evaluation rating from the previous two (2) years.
  - Supervisory recommendations.
  - Demonstration of the likelihood of continued employment with DCFS in a program serving Title IV-E eligible children, for the contracted period of time following the completion of the educational plan.
  - Writing skills.
  - Information obtained and observations made during the in-person interview.
- D. Deadlines for Review Process – Completion of the committee review, including the screening and interviewing phases, must occur within twenty (20) working days after the DCFS eligibility letters are sent to the applicants.
- E. Determining Number of Selectees - The maximum number of educational leave positions available is seven (7) for the full-time program and three (3) for the part-time program. The DCFS Director has discretion to increase or decrease the number of participants in the program.

- F. Committee's Recommendation - The DCFS Professional Development Unit will submit committee recommendations and applicant rankings to the DCFS Director within five (5) working days of notification of applicants selected by the committee.
- G. Notification to Applicants - Applicants will be notified in writing within ten (10) working days following the selection or non selection of applicants by the DCFS Director.
- H. Orientation - The Division will hold an orientation session for all selected applicants. The DCFS Professional Development unit will notify each selected applicant of the date and location of the orientation. The orientation agenda will address the following:
- A discussion of relevant personnel issues.
  - An explanation of responsibilities of both the selected employee and the Division.
  - An explanation of the Educational Leave Contract (CFS-4331).
  - A period for questions and answers.
  - Signing and notarizing the CFS-4333.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B7): GRADE POINT REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Minimum Grade Point to be Attained - The participant must meet all academic requirements of UALR and the UALR MSW program. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a scale of 4.0) must be maintained to remain in the full-time or part-time DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program.
- B. Reporting Grade Point - The participant must submit each semester's grades to the DCFS Professional Development Unit within ten (10) working days after final grades are received each semester.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B8): CLASS ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Each participant in the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program is expected to attend scheduled classes. A maximum of three (3) classes may be missed during a given semester. In case of a serious illness or emergency, the participant must contact the DCFS Professional Development Unit. Failure to attend scheduled classes will result in contract termination. The participant is considered a regular student and will take the same holidays as authorized by the university. Under the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program, the participant is required to attend all scheduled summer sessions.



**PROCEDURE (XI-B9): SUPERVISION WHILE ON EDUCATIONAL LEAVE**

The DCFS Professional Development Unit will be responsible for monitoring the performance and conduct of full-time educational leave participants for the duration of the program. The part-time participant will continue to receive direction from the participant's supervisor during assigned work hours.

**PROCEDURE (XI-B10): DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED AS EVIDENCE OF GRADUATION**

The MSW student must provide the DCFS Professional Development Unit with official notification of graduation no later than ten (10) days prior to the scheduled graduation date.

Upon graduation from the DCFS MSW program, the participant must arrange for UALR to furnish an official transcript to the DCFS Professional Development Unit. This must be provided within twenty (20) working days following graduation. The original transcript will be placed in the employee's official personnel file, housed at the DHS Office of Human Resources (OHR).

**PROCEDURE (XI-B11): PLACEMENT INTO A POSITION**

Following graduation from the UALR Graduate School of Social Work, DCFS will place the employee into a regular position, according to the guidelines listed below. Participation in the normal DHS competitive hiring process is not required for new graduates of the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program, but will be required for any subsequent position.

- A. Application Process Requirements - The graduating employee will complete an internal job application. The completed application must be sent to the DCFS Professional Development Unit six (6) weeks prior to the expected date of graduation. The DCFS Professional Development Unit will forward the document to the Assistant Director, Community Services, and the DCFS Personnel Unit.
- B. Identification of Appropriate Position - Within three (3) weeks of receiving an internal application, the DCFS Personnel Unit will review the Division's vacancies and identify a position of equal or higher grade than the position the employee held prior to acceptance into the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program. After the review, the DCFS Personnel Unit will forward the vacancy listing to the DCFS Assistant Director for Community Services and the DCFS Professional Development Unit. In addition to qualifications presented on the application, the geographic preference indicated by the employee will be a consideration in locating an appropriate placement.

Within two (2) weeks prior to graduation, the Assistant Director for Community Services, the DCFS Professional Development Unit, and the appropriate Area Manager will meet to make recommendations for placement. Placement interviews will be scheduled prior to the day on which the employee is scheduled to report to work.

- C. Time Frames Related to Placement – The DCFS Professional Development Unit will notify the student of the assigned county and the date for reporting to work. The employee will be placed into a DCFS position within thirty (30) calendar days following the date that the Division is notified of his/her graduation.
- D. Personnel Documentation Requirements - The DCFS Personnel Unit will complete and process the Request for Personnel Action (DHS-1161) and will ensure that all necessary approvals and documentation are attached. The DCFS Director must approve each placement before the employee is notified of the assigned position. A copy of the DHS-1161 indicating placement of the MSW graduate will be sent to DCFS Professional Development Unit for placement in the graduate's file.

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B12): WORK COMMITMENT TO THE DIVISION**

- A. Terms of Employee Obligation - As stipulated in the Educational Leave Contract (CFS-4331), the graduating employee must accept employment with DCFS in a direct service position. The employee must work the equivalent of two (2) months for each month of full-time educational leave and one month for each month of part-time educational leave. Attendance in any part of a month will be considered as a full month.

Consequences if Employee Violates Terms of Agreement - Failure by the employee to honor the work commitment constitutes a contract violation and will result in the employee becoming responsible for reimbursing DCFS for the full amount expended during the contract period. (See XI-B13 (B2) Breach of Contract/Contract Termination.)

#### **PROCEDURE (XI-B13): PERSONNEL PROCESSES RELATED TO THE DCFS EDUCATIONAL LEAVE PROGRAM**

- A. Designating Educational Leave Positions

Educational leave participants will be placed in a position determined by the DCFS Director.

## B. Contracting Requirements

In order to formalize an employee's participation in the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program, a contract between the Division and the employee is required, according to the following guidelines:

### 1. Requirements for Formal Contract

Acceptance into the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program is not considered official until the DCFS Director and the selected employee enter into a formal contract. Employees entering either the full-time or part-time educational leave program must sign and adhere to the provisions of the Educational Leave Contract (CFS-4331).

The agreement will detail the responsibilities and obligations of both parties in relation to the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program. Contract stipulations will address the following:

- a. Duration of the educational leave.
- b. Authorized salary and other benefits to be afforded the participant.
- c. Post-educational-leave work commitment to the Division.
- d. Provisions for premature contract termination.

### 2. Breach of Contract/Contract Termination

Violation of the terms of the Educational Leave Contract by the employee is considered a breach of the contract with DCFS. The Division will report a breach of contract simultaneously to the DHS Office of Administrative Services and the DHS Office of Chief Counsel. The employee will be required to make restitution to the Division for contract violations. Contract violations include, but are not limited to, being placed on academic or disciplinary probation or failing to meet the commitment for continued employment following graduation. The employee will be required to reimburse DCFS for salary and benefits and for all educational expenses, including tuition, books, academic fees, and other related expenses, for the completed period of educational leave. If an employee violates the terms of the contract after starting the work commitment, repayment will be calculated according to the months worked.

At the discretion of DCFS, the contract may be terminated or renegotiated following thirty (30) calendar days written notice to the employee. Circumstances leading to contract termination or re-negotiation may include insufficient funds, a reduction in force, or other reasons identified by DCFS.

C. Salary Received

DCFS provides a salary and benefits for each employee in the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program for the duration of the employee's participation in the program.

1. Determining Salary Amount - The salary amount to be paid a participant in the full-time and part-time programs will be determined by the DCFS Director. This amount may not exceed the employee's salary prior to acceptance into the program.
2. Performance-based Merit Raises and Cost-of-Living Salary Increases - The employee on full-time or part-time educational leave will not qualify for any performance-based merit raise program legislated by the Arkansas General Assembly.
3. Income Tax and Social Security Deductions - DCFS will continue to withhold income tax and Social Security taxes from the employee's salary while the employee is a participant in the DCFS Educational Leave and Educational Assistance Program.

D. Rights and Benefits Retained

An employee on full-time or part-time DCFS MSW educational leave will retain all regular-status rights and benefits, unless otherwise noted.

1. Annual/Sick Leave Accrual – Employees on full-time MSW educational leave will not accrue annual or sick leave. However, if an emergency situation occurs and a full-time student is unable to attend class, the student shall contact the DCFS Professional Development Unit to discuss available options.

A participant in the part-time educational leave program will accrue annual and sick leave on a pro-rated basis.

2. Retirement - Retirement deductions, if applicable, will continue to be withheld for an employee on educational leave. The formula for calculating length of service for retirement purposes will not be affected by an employee's participation in the DCFS Educational Leave Program.
3. Insurance - A participant's insurance coverage contribution will continue to be withheld while the employee remains on educational leave. DCFS will continue to assume responsibility for a portion of the employee's insurance.

E. Personnel Performance Evaluation System/Career Ladder Incentive Program Eligibility

The full-time participant in the DCFS MSW Educational Leave Program will not be subject to the annual evaluations required by the Arkansas Personnel Performance Evaluation System (PPES). The part-time participant will be evaluated only if actual work is performed for an equivalent of six or more months, as determined by the employee's PPES rating period. Neither full-time nor part-time participants will be eligible for the Career Ladder Incentive Program (CLIP).

**POLICY (XI-C): CHILD WELFARE STUDENT STIPEND PROGRAM**

The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) participates in a child welfare student stipend program in order to hire more employees with degrees in social work and social--work-related-fields on a state-wide basis to work in DCFS programs serving Title IV-E eligible children. Any student awarded a stipend is under contract with the Division and will be required to work for DCFS after graduation.

Eligible applicants may attend any participating degree program in the State of Arkansas. The Division and the University Partnership will determine yearly the number of stipends awarded. The Division, in conjunction with Title IV-E university staff, will determine which students will receive stipends.

Students in the BSW and other participating bachelor's degree programs are awarded stipends during their senior year.

DCFS may approve stipends for second year MSW students provided that any DCFS educational leave positions are not filled and the number of MSW stipend students does not exceed the number of vacant educational leave positions.

The following information provides the procedures governing the Child Welfare Student Stipend Program.

**PROCEDURE (XI-C1): PROCESS FOR RECEIVING A STIPEND**

Students interested in the Child Welfare Student Stipend Program are required to complete the Child Welfare Student Stipend Application (CFS-4332). Applications are reviewed and recommendations made by the Title IV-E university staff and the DCFS Area Managers. Upon selection the university will submit a copy of the Child Welfare Student Stipend Application (CFS-4332) and the original Child Welfare Student Stipend Agreement (CFS-4330) to the DCFS Professional Development Unit for review. After review, the DCFS Professional Development Unit will forward the CFS-4330 to the DCFS Director for approval and signature.

The student is required to enter into a contract with the Division upon awarding of the stipend. The student must sign and adhere to the provisions of the Child Welfare Student Stipend Agreement (CFS-4330). If the student violates the

terms of the contract, the Division will employ remedies to address the identified breach.

### **PROCEDURE (XI-C2): SELECTION CRITERIA**

The decision to award a stipend will be based on the following:

- Academic success. The student can not be on probation or in jeopardy of not graduating.
- Interest in child welfare; e.g., volunteer work, attendance at workshops, special training, related work experiences, independent study projects.
- Completion, or plan to complete, one or more courses/seminars with an emphasis in child welfare.
- Willingness to work, following graduation, in any county based on the needs of the Division.
- Agreement by student to complete the number of hours required by the University for field placement, while based in an assigned DCFS county office under the joint supervision of a University field instructor and DCFS supervisor.
- The approval of MSW stipends will occur as outlined in Procedure XI-B6 "The Selection Process".

### **PROCEDURE (XI-C3): STUDENT COMMITMENT TO DCFS**

- a. The student commits to fulfill field hours in a DCFS county office, as required by the participating University program.
- b. The student commits to accept employment with DCFS for a minimum of one (1) year following graduation.

### **PROCEDURE (XI-C4): DCFS COMMITMENT TO STUDENT**

The Division agrees to provide the student trainee with the opportunity to complete the required field hours at a DCFS county office under the joint supervision of a University field instructor and DCFS supervisor.

### **PROCEDURE (XI-C5): EMPLOYMENT WITH DCFS**

- a. All stipend recipients must complete a "State of Arkansas Employment Application" and send it to the DCFS Professional Development Unit six (6) weeks prior to the expected date of graduation.
- b. DCFS reserves the right to designate counties where staff are needed and require students to apply in those counties identified by DCFS.

- c. DCFS reserves the right to specify the minimum number of counties in which students must state on the "State of Arkansas Employment Application" that they will accept employment.
- d. On the State employment application, the student will list the job title as "Family Service Worker Trainee" and designate the minimum number of counties required by DCFS in which the student is willing to accept employment.
- e. Students must accept interviews, answer questions, and otherwise actively participate in the hiring process in an ethical manner. The University designee will coordinate with the DCFS Professional Development Unit to keep students abreast of employment opportunities with the Division and help them follow-through with their commitment to the Division.
- f. If the student is not offered a Family Service Worker Trainee position within sixty (60) days following graduation, the student no longer is obligated to accept employment or repay the stipend.
- g. The student must repay any stipend monies received if a field placement is terminated or employment denied due to the results of:
  - An Arkansas Central Registry check,
  - An Arkansas State Police criminal background check (and, if required, a check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation),
  - A drug/alcohol screen, or
  - The provisions of the State Vehicle Safety Program are violated.
- h. If the student becomes employed by DCFS but chooses to leave prior to fulfilling the stipend commitment, the student must repay the stipend pro-rated according to the number of months worked.



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
and

---

(name of university)

CHILD WELFARE STUDENT STIPEND AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the terms herein of the Division  
of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and \_\_\_\_\_  
name of university

In exchange for payment of a stipend in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per semester (for  
a maximum of two semesters).

The stipend will be paid during \_\_\_\_\_ semester, \_\_\_\_\_ and  
(year)  
\_\_\_\_\_ semester, \_\_\_\_\_.  
(year)

SECTION I

I certify that I:

1. Am a student in good standing (not on probation or otherwise in jeopardy of not graduating) in the final year of the Social Work participating degree program at the university named herein;
2. Have an interest in child welfare and have completed or will complete before graduation one (1) or more courses/seminars with an emphasis in child welfare.
3. Am willing to accept employment with DCFS within sixty (60) days of graduation;
4. Have provided complete and accurate information for an Arkansas Central Registry check, Arkansas State Police criminal background check (and, if required, a check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation), the State Vehicle Safety Program, and a drug/alcohol screen;
5. Understand that DCFS is required by law or policy to complete these background inquiries for all persons working directly with children and families;
6. Understand that DCFS is not my employer during the stipend semesters and does not provide me with any benefits other than the stipend.

SECTION II

I agree to:

1. Complete the number of hours required by the University for field placement while based in an assigned DCFS county office under the joint supervision of a University field instructor and DCFS supervisor;
2. Maintain confidentiality and perform all assignments during field placement in compliance with the standards of DCFS, the University, and the professional Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers;

3. Repay any stipend monies received if my field placement is terminated or employment denied due to the results of the Arkansas Central Registry or criminal background check, or the State Vehicle Safety Program check, or a drug/alcohol screen; failure to maintain academic progress as defined in Section I-1& 2 above, or failure to graduate within one (1) semester after completion of my field placement; or unsatisfactory performance in my field placement; or failure to comply with minimal conduct standards;
4. Arrange for the University to send my official transcript to DCFS Professional Development Unit within twenty (20) working days after graduation;
5. Work for DCFS as a full time employee for a minimum of one (1) year following graduation;
6. Complete and submit a State of Arkansas Employment Application that 1.) lists "Family Service Worker Trainee" as the title of the job sought, and 2.) selects from counties designated by DCFS (see Section IV-1 below), to the DCFS Professional Development Unit no later than six (6) weeks before my expected graduation date;
7. Actively participate in the employment process by accepting interviews and being available for employment for sixty (60) days following my date of graduation;
8. Accept employment in any county designated by DCFS as needing staff (see Section IV-1 below);
9. Repay the entire stipend received if I refuse an offer of employment from DCFS made within sixty (60) days after the date of my graduation;
10. Repay the amount of stipend prorated according to the length of time worked if I choose to quit working for DCFS prior to fulfilling my obligation.

### SECTION III

DCFS agrees to:

1. Make funds available for stipends;
2. Provide field placement opportunities;
3. Furnish Students with performance standards, including policies, rules, and regulations, pertinent to Students' field placement.

### Section IV

DCFS reserves the right to:

1. Designate counties where staff are needed and require that students apply, be interviewed, and accept employment, if offered, in those counties;
2. Not employ a Student after graduation or, if employment is not offered within sixty (60) days after graduation, release a Student from any obligation to accept employment or repay the stipend;
3. Terminate or renegotiate this Agreement upon thirty (30) days written notice to the Student in the event of insufficient funds, a reduction in force, or for other reason;
4. Report offenses that constitute a breach of contract to the DHS Office of Administrative Services and the DHS Office of Chief Counsel.

This Agreement shall commence on the date of the last signature below and shall terminate upon completion of all obligations herein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement:

By signing this Agreement I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information presented is true and factual. I certify that I will make every effort to fully cooperate during the employment interview. I further certify that I have received, read and understand DCFS Policy XI-C.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Date

County of \_\_\_\_\_ State of \_\_\_\_\_

Signed and Sealed before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_  
(month) (year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
1. University Field Instructor Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
2. University Title IV-E Coordinator Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
3. DCFS Area Manager Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
4. DCFS Director Date

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
EDUCATIONAL LEAVE CONTRACT  
(Full-time/Part-time MSW Student)**

This Agreement is entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

by and between the Department of Human Services (herein referred to as DHS) and  
\_\_\_\_\_ (herein referred to as Employee).

Educational leave [     ] full-time [     ] part-time will be for the period from  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

The Employee's employment commitment period will begin at the end of the educational leave and continue until such time as the employee has worked for the Division of Children and Family Services \_\_\_\_\_ month(s) for each month or part of a month educational leave is granted. A date certain will be determined upon completion of the employee's educational leave, and such date will be the termination date of this Agreement.

**SECTION I**

DHS, in consideration of certain covenants hereinafter agreed to by the Employee, and in an effort to secure appropriate training for the staff of DHS, does agree to grant educational leave to the Employee with the following certifications:

1. The current DCFS Employee holds the position of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (job title) and has at least two consecutive years of full time, regular status DCFS employment working in child welfare;
2. The Employee currently occupies a position designated as a Grade 22 or lower;
3. The Employee has not accrued more than three (3) disciplinary points for infractions of DHS conduct standards during the past two (2) years;
4. The Employee agrees to continued employment with DCFS serving Title IV-E eligible children in accordance with Section II-8;
5. The Employee will be paid \$\_\_\_\_\_ in salary as determined by the DCFS Director and will retain benefits as indicated in DCFS MSW Educational Leave Policy XI-B13 (D).

**SECTION II**

The Employee, in consideration of the granting of educational leave by DHS and the benefits set out above, agrees as follows:

1. The Employee will meet all academic requirements of the educational institution and the MSW program. The Employee will maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 (on a scale of 4.0) while participating in the Educational Leave Program;
2. The Employee will submit the employee's grades each semester to the DCFS Professional Development Unit within ten (10) working days after the grades are received;
3. The Employee will attend scheduled classes on a regular basis and will not miss more than three (3) classes during any semester;

4. The Employee will notify the DCFS Professional Development Unit if unable to attend class;
5. The Employee will arrange for the educational institution to furnish an official transcript to the DCFS Professional Development Unit within twenty (20) working days following graduation;
6. The Employee will adhere to DHS Policy 1048 "Educational Leave and Assistance" and DCFS Policy XI "DCFS Educational Leave and Educational Assistance" and any amendments thereto. The Employee will remain employed with DCFS during enrollment, and, upon completion will continue to work for DCFS in a direct service position \_\_\_\_\_ month(s) for each month of educational leave. Work commitment is computed from the time the educational leave is fully completed. Attendance in any part of a month will be considered as a full month;
7. The Employee will repay any educational leave monies owed if terminated due to violation of DHS Policy No. 1085, "Minimum Conduct Standards for DHS Employees."

In the event of the Employee's failure to perform the above obligations, the Employee will be considered in breach of contract and the Employee will make repayment to DHS in accordance with Section III-2, 3, 4, or 5.

### **SECTION III**

DHS and the Employee mutually agree as follows:

1. Both parties agree to adhere to all applicable State laws and DHS policies and procedures.
2. If the employment relationship between the parties is terminated due to an action by the Employee before satisfactory completion of the terms of this contract, the Employee agrees to repay DHS for all the Employee's salary payments and DHS contributions to Social Security, State retirement, State employee's insurance, and any other payroll deductions; and any tuition, fees, and books paid for by DHS during the completed period of educational leave. Annual leave will be adjusted proportionately for employees on part-time educational leave. These amounts will be due and owing for breach of contract.
3. DHS may terminate this contract and retain the Employee in the position stated in Section I-1, or in a comparable position, if the Employee is placed on academic or disciplinary probation. In such case, the Employee will be considered in breach of contract, and all monies expended by DHS as set out in Section III-2 above, will be due and owing for breach of contract.
4. Failure by the Employee, for any reason, to complete the course of study at the educational institution within the agreed upon time frame shall constitute a breach of contract. All monies and accruals, as set out in Section III-2 above, will be due and owing for breach of contract.
5. Any absence outside of the regular school term breaks will be reported to the DCFS Professional Development Unit. The Employee is considered a regular student and will take the same scheduled school holidays and term breaks as the institution. Failure of the Employee to comply shall constitute a breach of contract. All monies and accruals set out in Section III-2 above will be due and owing for breach of contract.

6. At the option of DHS, in the event of insufficient funds or of a reduction in force, or for other reasons specified by DHS, this agreement may be terminated or renegotiated upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the Employee.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement on the day and year first written above.

Employee	Date
----------	------

State of Arkansas

County of \_\_\_\_\_)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
(year) (month)

Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

---

---

DHS Director

---

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
DCFS Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES  
CHILD WELFARE STUDENT STIPEND APPLICATION**

NAME OF STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ SSN# \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL ADDRESS & PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT ADDRESS & PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF PARENTS OR CLOSEST RELATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS & PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ DECLARED MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_

PLANNED GRADUATION DATE (MO/DA/YR) \_\_\_\_\_

When do you plan to take: Field I \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/year Field II \_\_\_\_\_ Semester/year

Do you have regular access to a car for use during field agency hours? \_\_\_\_\_

List child welfare related courses or seminars you have taken or plan to take:

Course name _____	Semester & year _____
-------------------	-----------------------

DCFS has the greatest need for Family Service Workers in some counties which have chronic vacancies or periodic high vacancy rates. Would you be willing to work any where in the State following graduation? \_\_\_\_\_

List at least five (5) counties where you would prefer to work after graduation:

1. _____	3. _____	5. _____
2. _____	4. _____	6. _____

List your experiences that relate to child welfare:

Volunteer work: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance at workshops or conferences: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this page if you need additional space for any of the previous questions.

Also on this page write at least a paragraph (typed, double spaced) describing your interest in and commitment to helping children and families.

Attach a copy of your unofficial transcript and three (3) letters of reference from people (no relatives) who have knowledge of your character and work habits.

I have received, read and understand DCFS Policy XI-C "Child Welfare Student Stipend Program".

---

Student signature

---

Date